

Application/Control Number: 09/817,100

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claims pto

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1. (Currently Amended) A method for processing a return of an item purchased from a selling merchant by a remote customer, said method comprising:

receiving an order for said item from said customer, said order including customer-related information;

storing said customer-related information in a storage device;

sending said item to said customer by said selling merchant;

receiving a return communication from said customer requesting a return of said item to said selling merchant;

retrieving said customer-related information from said storage device; and

effecting an auction of said item by said selling merchant following said receiving of said return communication from said customer; and

sending a shipping communication including portions of said customer-related information to said customer, said shipping communication identifying a receiving entity ~~other than said selling merchant~~ to whom said item is to be returned, said receiving party being a winner of said auction.

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2. (Previously Amended) The method as set forth in claim 1 and further including:

receiving a return receipt notice from said receiving entity when said item has been received by said receiving entity.

3. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein said method further includes:

charging a designated customer account after receiving said order.

4. (Previously Amended) The method as set forth in claim 3 and further including crediting said customer account after receiving said return receipt notice from said receiving entity.

5. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 4 and further including sending notice of said crediting to said customer.

6. (Currently Amended) The method as set forth in claim 1 and further including:

effecting an auction of said item following said receiving of said return communication from said customer, said receiver receiving entity being a winner of said auction.

7. (Previously Amended) The method as set forth in claim 1 and further including maintaining a database for storing information concerning said customer, said item and said receiving entity, said database being updated upon receipt of an order, a return request or a return receipt notice.

8. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein said receiving of said return request and said sending of said shipping communication are accomplished by email communication.

9. (Original) The method as set forth in claim 8 wherein said return receipt notice is accomplished by email.

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10~~4~~ (Previously Amended) The method as set forth in claim 4 wherein said notice of said crediting is accomplished by email.

11. (Currently Amended) A storage medium including machine readable coded indicia, said storage medium being selectively coupled through a reading device to processing circuitry within a computing system, said reading device being selectively operable to read said machine readable coded indicia and provide program signals representative thereof, said program signals being effective to process a return of an item purchased by a customer, said program signals being selectively operable to accomplish the steps of:

receiving an order for said item from said customer, said order including customer-related information;

storing said customer-related information in a storage device;

effecting a sending of said item to said customer by said selling merchant;

receiving a return communication from said customer requesting a return of said item to said selling merchant;

retrieving said customer-related information from said storage device; and

effecting an auction of said item by said selling merchant following said receiving of said return communication from said customer; and

sending a shipping communication including portions of said

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customer-related information to said customer, said shipping communication identifying a receiving entity ~~other than said selling merchant~~ to whom said item is to be returned, said receiving party being a winner of said auction.

12. (Previously Amended) The medium as set forth in claim 11 wherein said program signals are further operable for:

effecting a receipt a return receipt notice from said receiving entity when said item has been received by said receiving entity.

13. (Original) The medium as set forth in claim 12 wherein said program signals are further operable for:

effecting a charging a designated customer account after receiving said order.

14. (Previously Amended) The medium as set forth in claim 13 wherein said program signals are further operable for effecting a crediting of said customer account after receiving said return receipt notice from said receiving entity.

15. (Original) The medium as set forth in claim 14 wherein said program signals are further operable for effecting said sending of said notice of said crediting to said customer.

16. (Currently Amended) The medium as set forth in claim 11 wherein said program signals are further operable for effecting an initiation of an auction of said item following said receiving of said return communication from said customer, ~~said receiver~~ receiving entity being a winner of said auction.

17. (Previously Amended) The medium as set forth in claim 11 and further including maintaining a database for storing information concerning said customer, said item and said receiving entity, said program signals being further operable for updating said

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database upon receipt of an order, a return request or a return receipt notice.

18. (Original) The medium as set forth in claim 11 wherein said receiving of said return request and said sending of said shipping communication are accomplished by email communication.

19. (Original) The medium as set forth in claim 18 wherein said return receipt notice is accomplished by email.

20. (Previously Amended) The medium as set forth in claim 14 wherein said notice of said crediting is accomplished by email.

21. (Currently Amended) A processing system including a system bus, a processor, a memory system, and a network interface, all coupled to said system bus, said processing system being operable in response to an item return program being executed from said memory system for effecting a return of an item purchased from a selling merchant by a customer at a remote location through said network interface, said processing system being selectively operable to receive an order for said item from said customer over said network interface, said order including customer-related information, storing said customer-related information in said memory system, and effecting a sending of said item to said customer by said selling merchant, said processing system being further operable for receiving a return communication from said customer requesting a return of said item to said selling merchant, retrieving said customer-related information from said memory system, effecting an auction of said item by said selling merchant following said receiving of said return communication from said customer, and sending a shipping communication including portions of said customer-related information to said customer, said shipping communication identifying a receiving

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~~entity other than said selling merchant to whom said item is to be returned, said receiving party being a winner of said auction.~~

22. (Previously Amended) The system as set forth in claim 21 and further including:

receiving a return receipt notice from said receiving entity through said network interface when said item has been received by said receiving entity.

23. (Previously Amended) The system as set forth in claim 22 wherein said method further includes:

charging a designated customer account in said memory system after receiving said order.

24. (Previously Amended) The system as set forth in claim 23 and further including crediting said customer account in said memory system after receiving said return receipt notice from said receiving entity.

25. (Original) The system as set forth in claim 24 wherein said system is further operable to effect a sending of a notice of said crediting to said customer through said network interface.